THE RAGTIMER

SEPTEMBER 1972

OCTOBER 1972

PUBLISHED BY

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

Notice Of New Addition To Catalogue

Commercially Published Folio

CF-807 THE BEST OF RAGTIME FAVORITES (HANSEN)
Contains 33 piano solo rags by Chauvin, Hampton, Hayden, Held, Joplin, Krell, Lamb, Pratt and Scott. The folio also contains a "How to play Ragtime Piano" section, 4 simpified rags by Billy Taylor and 9 stylistically arranged songs by Joe "Fingers" Carr.
Price $4. 00 (includes postage and handling)

Notice Of Deletion From Catalogue

Commercially Published Folio

CF-804 34 RAGTIME JAZZ CLASSICS (MELROSE)
This folio is no longer available. (Please delete from page 6 of the Catalogue)

START YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EARLY

Remember that RECORDS often make the ideal Christmas gift - and a pleasing means of promoting RAGTIME. The following are currently in stock:

RSR-01	Classic & Modern Rags	Tom Shea
RSR-02	Prairie Ragtime	Tom Shea
RSR-04	Ragtime Down The Line	Charlie Rasch
RSR-05	Mississippi Valley Ragtime	Trebor Tichenor
RSR-08	The Music Of Joe Jordan	Lois Delano
ARPEGGIO	The Entertainer	Max Morath

(The above $5. 00 each postpaid)

JAZZOLOGY JCE 71 - Ragtime: A New View ..... D. Ashwander
EBM #1 Eubie Blake featuring Ivan H. Browning
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NEW RECORD OFFERING

On the basis of a limited quantity we are pleased to offer the boxed set of 4-Lp records covering "THE COMPLETE WORKS OF JELLY ROLL MORTON" with John W. "Knocky" Parker at the piano. The records consist of Audiophile:

AP 102 Rags And Blues
AP 103 Spanish Rhythms
AP 104 Barrelhouse And Stomps
AP 105 Memoirs And Recollections

Reviewed by Tex Wyndham in THE RAGTIMER Nov. /Dec. 1971

(Price is $24. 00 postpaid)

RAGTIME . . .
UNDER YOUR HAT

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

PLEASE
Renew your membership with THE RAGTIME SOCIETY Inc. for the year 1973!

Prepayment should be made prior to January 1st of 1973

Use the attached renewal form and do it now!

We are entitled to enjoy our 10th ANNIVERSARY YEAR with the pride of knowing that ten years of effort has not been in vain. There's a lot of RAGTIME in the air these days. It is mostly due to the enthusiasm and activities of our SOCIETY members around the world and the influence they have had on others.

The contributions of the two surviving giants of the Ragtime era, Eubie Blake and Willie (The Lion) Smith, continues to enrich the scene. Apart from our own efforts, the Annual Ragtime Festival at St. Louis and the Maple Leaf Club at Los Angeles share in giving RAGTIME the renewal of popularity that it is currently enjoying. The performances of Scott Joplin's Ragtime Opera "TREEMONISHA" at Atlanta was an acclaimed event of the year.

The Press has become increasingly aware of the presence of RAGTIME. LIFE magazine, which is distributed internationally, gave its "Tip of the Hat" to the cause in its issue of July 21, 1972 in an article headed REBIRTH OF RAGTIME. There is a prediction of 1903 in the words of Sydney Brown that clearly has come true, "I can shake the earth's foundation with the Maple Leaf Rag!"

Help to keep "RAGTIME" alive and well. Send in your renewal. The annual membership subscription is still $5. 00. Be a booster for "RAGTIME" and sign up a new member. Use the second application blank of the renewal form attached to this issue of THE RAGTIMER for that purpose.

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TREBOR JAY TICHENOR: RAGTIME PROFESSOR

Trebor is a graduate of Washington University. The university magazine in its summer 1972 issue honoured Trebor as an illustrious member of the Alumni describing him as a many-faceted talent, a gifted pianist, musicologist, collector, scholar and an authority on ragtime music. The following article by Dorothy Brockhoff appeared in the already mentioned Washington University Magazine under the heading Alumnus Trebor Jay Tichenor - Ragtime Professor. THE RAGTIMER recognizes that Trebor is deserving of this well-earned tribute.

Trebor Jay Tichenor, whose first name is "Robert" spelled backwards, is a ragtime pianist who can also play great traditional jazz. He is one of the mainstays of the St. Louis Ragtimers.

ALUMNUS TREBOR JAY TICHENOR -

RAGTIME PROFESSOR

Trebor Jay Tichenor is the pianist in a floating saloon on a registered national historic landmark, the Goldenrod Showboat moored at the St. Louis levee. The vessel, built in 1909 and now restored to rococo splendor, is an original and so is Tichenor.

Casual tourists, however, who wander into the second-floor bar where Tichenor plays with his fellow musicians, known collectively as the St. Louis Ragtimers, generally listen and leave after a few sets without ever realizing that the 32-year old man hunched over the old, cable upright is something more than an extraordinarily gifted piano player.

It is not that they don't notice Tichenor. A man of blimp-like proportions, he looks from the rear rather like a costumed Buddha resplendent in Gay Nineties satin vest, sleeve garters, and derby. But the back view is all that the audience ever sees until he lumbers out on breaks, for Tichenor's manner is that of the reserved concert pianist, rather than that of the easy-going popular entertainer. Intense and self-contained, he loses himself in the music and leaves the banter to Al Stricker, the banjo player of the Ragtimers' ensemble.

His fellow band members call Tichenor "the professor," a title traditionally bestowed on pianists in turn-of-the-century musical groups because the piano player was supposed to have a little more education than his colleagues, but in Tichenor's case it is an apt appellation, for he is a first-rate scholar of a type of music currently enjoying a renaissance - ragtime.

Tichenor is, in fact, a man obsessed by ragtime, with a house on the fringes of Carondelet Park bulging with some seven thousand piano rolls (800 to 1000 of them rags); a major collection of sheet music, including the original publications of all the important composers of this type of music, and even a swinging door from the old Rose Bud Cafe on Market Street, where some of the ragtime greats used to play. A self-educated musicologist, who graduated from Washington University in 1963 with a major in French rather than music, Tichenor is, according to Rudi Blesh, co-author of the ragtime bible, They All Played Ragtime, a "Joplinophile."

For the uninitiated, "Joplinophile" means one who is a Scott Joplin devotee, and there are quite a few of such people around these days, thanks to a dramatic resurgence of interest in Joplin, a ragtime great who died in 1917 and whose genius was largely unappreciated until fairly recently. What distinguishes Tichenor from so many other Joplinophiles, however, is that he has been totally dedicated to Joplin, and, indeed, the whole subject of ragtime since he was thirteen years old. In this important respect, he differs, for example, from Harold C. Schonberg, The New York Times music critic, who did not discover Joplin until January of 1971, and then wrote a rhapsodic article about his newly found hero entitled "Scholars, Get Busy on Scott Joplin!"

Trebor Tichenor is too polite to say he was amused when he read this admonition, but "getting busy on Scott Joplin" is exactly what he's been doing ever since 1953 when, as

he vividly recalls, he heard Joplin's celebrated "Maple Leaf Rag" and "all the lights went on." At that time, interest in ragtime had not yet caught on with the Eastern music establishment, and those like young Tichenor, who were captivated by Joplin, acknowledged "King of the Ragtime Composers," were regarded as the equivalent to today's "freaks," wasting their time on "honky-tonk trash."

Indeed, in the beginning, Tichenor himself refused to listen to leaders of the fast and flashy school of ragtime such as "Knuckles O'Toole," and insisted on concentrating on what the purists still call "classic" ragtime. This was the kind of ragtime which reached its zenith in the compositions of Joplin who, as the brilliant Juilliard-trained Joshua Rifkin has written, "transformed the rough vibrancy of his forebears into subtle and polished art." Interestingly enough, Joplin cautioned on some of his music, "Do not play this piece fast. It is never right to play 'ragtime' fast."

It is these works and others like them which Schonberg has characterized as "enchanting," and which Winthrop Sargeant, The New Yorker music critic, has praised "as part of America's artistic heritage and no mean examples of the art of writing for the piano."

Why has ragtime, a musical phenomenon which emerged in the late 1890s in the United States, exploded into a craze which peaked about 1910, and then virtually disappeared at about the time of World War I, suddenly become the center of attention again in a variety of musical circles? Tichenor credits a record by Rifkin called "Scott Joplin Piano Rags," released in 1970 on the Nonesuch label, with having had a major influence on the revival of interest in ragtime. "I think it took someone with Rifkin's credentials and his knowledge to bring this music to a wide audience of classical music lovers," Tichenor explained. "There are some people who disagree with the way Rifkin plays," he continued, "but you can't fault the record technically. I think it one that Joplin would enjoy. Remember, it was the first such recording to be released nationally."

Tichenor's theory makes sense when one recalls that it was this Rifkin recording which first focused Schonberg's attention on Joplin. After hearing it, Schonberg told his New York Times readers that "the syncopations - and ragtime is based on syncopation - were as idiomatically applied as the rubatos in a Chopin mazurka. Joplin was a real composer."

Just how talented a composer Joplin really was became evident with the release early this year of a two-volume compendium, The Collected Works Of Scott Joplin, edited by Vera Brodsky Lawrence with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. Nearly all of Joplin's fifty-three pieces for piano, as well as his opera "Treemonisha" are among the entries in this tremendous collection. Tichenor was one of those who helped Mrs. Lawrence, a former concert pianist, with the compilation of this work. "I bundled up all my original Joplin rags and sent them to her because the Library of Congress copies were generally in such bad shape," he said. It must have been an agonizing decision for Tichenor to agree to ship off all of his irreplaceable sheet music, but he mentions it only in passing.

The reticence so evident when he is in the Goldenrod spotlight is also characteristic of him offstage. He speaks softly, almost shyly, and in measured phrases. "I find it

difficult to project except through my music," is the way he puts it. "I guess you could say I'm an introvert."

That Joplin should have suddenly come into his own, however, does not surprise Tichenor. "I'm amazed it didn't happen sooner," he said. Even he was a bit astonished, however, when after sixty years of gathering dust on library shelves, "Treemonisha" finally made it to the stage at Atlanta's Memorial Arts Center in January of this year.

Down to the Peachtree State went the Time's peripatetic Schonberg. He found parts of the opera amazing - particularly the "Real Slow Drag" that ends the work. Schonberg exclaimed: "Harmonically enchanting, full of the tensions of an entire race, rhythmically catching, it refuses to leave the mind. Talk about soul music!"

For a variety of reasons including illness, bad weather, and the fact that showboat musicians are not so affluent as rock stars, Tichenor missed the Atlanta premiere. "It is incredible that I wasn't there," he admitted. "Incredible!" But he did make it to New York in mid-May for a Ragtime Jamboree in Brooklyn College's Gershwin Theatre, where he was one of six pianists who performed there. Trebor played two compositions by S. Brunson Campbell, a protégé of Joplin's, and two of his own works, "It's a Long Way Back Home" and "Bucksnort Stomp." Brun Campbell had an infectious folk rag style reminiscent of Tichenor's own technique, and representative compositions by both composers are included on a recording called "Mississippi Valley Ragtime" which Tichenor made in 1966 for Scroll Records.

Ragtime - good ragtime - is not easy music to play. Critic Sargeant made this point cogently when he observed: "The right-hand rhythmic patterns of ragtime, in fact, represented the most complicated rhythmic structures ever written down by American popular composers. Polyrhythm and syncopation, subsequently features of jazz, were elaborated to an extraordinary extent, and the right hand of a good ragtime writer scarcely knew what his thumping left hand was doing."

Tichenor's preparation included ten years of intensive classical training, begun when he was but five years old. Several times he started and stopped, but encouraged by his mother, who herself had once had her own band, called "Letty's Collegiate Syncopators," he persevered.

Ragtime's complexity is attributable, at least in part, to its heterogeneous background. It represents, according to Rifkin, a special mix of diverse musical strands: "Marching-band music; dances such as the polka, quadrille, and schottische, sentimental songs, and salon music, bound together with the vital syncopated rhythms indigenous to black music in Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States."

Ragtime's early practitioners, most of them Black, could find jobs playing only in saloons and bordellos with the result, as Rudi Blesh has written, that "America both accepted and rejected ragtime. It met fanatic opposition from an informal entente of the moralistic prudes, the Europe-oriented culture snobs, and an Academy that felt suddenly challenged.... The real trouble with ragtime was not that it was no good but that it was too good, and it had, so to speak, been born out of wedlock, with at least a part of its parentage Black."

Tichenor is quite familiar with such opposition. Various teachers tried along the way to steer him in another direction; even his parents worried when it became apparent that he wanted to play such music professionally. "But by the time I graduated from Washington University," Tichenor recalled, "it was hard to concentrate on anything else but music. It just sort of took over. The music really got me. I was so interested in it that I really didn't need any encouragement."

Trebor Tichenor's basement is a treasure trove of ragtime memorabilia. Thousands of piano rolls are squirreled away there, together with a large and extremely rare collection of ragtime sheet music.

Down on the showboat these days, the St. Louis Ragtimers play both rags and traditional jazz. Their mastery of a wide variety of music is one of the reasons why they are such a viable group, with a history of playing together since 1961. Tichenor himself, unlike many other ragtime pianists, can also improvise, which explains why he is able to play traditional jazz piano so well.

But intellectually and emotionally his musical commitment is to ragtime. Joplin, of course, is Tichenor's idol. "He had more subtlety and depth," Tichenor explained, "but a couple of other men - James Scott and Joe Lamb - were almost as great. You can listen to other composers - there are some 4000 published rags and at least another thousand which were never copyrighted - but you always come back to these three."

Currently, Tichenor and Dave Jasen, a ragtime zealot in New York, are working on a ragtime encyclopedia. Another dream which Tichenor intends to make a reality is the establishment of a ragtime study center in the St. Louis area. In one sense it will be a museum, even though Tichenor hates that word. There he intends to make available his enormous holdings so that St. Louis, which was once a great ragtime capital, will again be the undisputed center and clearinghouse for this type of music.

Meanwhile, Tichenor, one of the founders of the Ragtime Festival, an annual event on the Goldenrod which attracts several thousand fans from all over the country each June, is preparing for this year's event. He is also struggling to meet deadlines for another in a series of analytical ragtime articles which he continues to write for scholarly journals.

Sandwiched between all of these efforts, Tichenor does the commentary on a radio show devoted to ragtime, aired over KDNA-FM each Tuesday evening from eight to nine. At first, Tichenor found this a formidable task, but in recent weeks he has lost his mike fright and does the show live with only a few notes as a guide.

Asked if he ever became bored with ragtime, Tichenor replied thoughtfully, "Sometimes you have the sense that you are working in a corner, but there's a lot more there than people realize. After all, ragtime was a widely creative thing for some twenty years. Somehow I manage to keep it fresh, and there's always something that needs to be done. We're still trying to find one Joplin piano roll, 'Pleasant Moments'." As for those who still don't understand what he sees in ragtime, Tichenor shook his head ruefully and confessed, "I never was able to understand why they couldn't hear what I hear."

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12TH ANNUAL MARIPOSA FESTIVAL
HELD AT TORONTO JULY 14 to 16, 1972

Canada's biggest annual folk festival was attended by thousands of folk music fans. A long list of popular artists attended and performed over the three-day period. Dozens of concerts were presented by more than 60 participating groups and several stages were in use at the same time.

Of interest to ragtimers was the inclusion of Ragtime on the program. A concert entitled "Ragtime - Cathouse to Concert Stage" was performed by John Arpin and Roosevelt Sykes.

Roosevelt Sykes, the veteran pianist and composer of blues classics was also teamed up with an old friend, blues man Bukka White.

RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Center CLP-9 'Butch Thompson Plays Jelly Roll Morton - Piano Solos - Vol. II'

Selections: King Porter Stomp, Jungle Blues, Fat Meat and Greens, Bert Williams, Tiger Rag, Pep, Kansas City Stomps, The Crave, Seattle Hunch, Original Rags, I Hate A Man Like You, Black Bottom Stomp.

Available from: Center Records,
Rt. 3, Box 754,
Salisbury, North Carolina 28144.

RCA Victor LSP-6016 (2-Lp set) 'The Memoirs Of Willie The Lion Smith'

Selections: Relaxin', Sand Dune, Alexander's Ragtime Band, S-H-I-N-E, That Barbershop Chord, Red Head, Where's My Red Red Rose, Blue Skies, Nagasaki, Running Wild, Diga Diga Doo, Got Everything But You, Doin' The New Low Down, Love Will Find A Way, I'm Just Wild About Harry, Chevy Chase, Memories Of You, Porter's Love Song To A Chambermaid, Old Fashioned Love, Carolina Shout, Charleston, Ain't Misbehavin', Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now, Sophisticated Lady, Solitude, Portrait Of The Duke, Satin Doll, When It's Sleepy Time Down South, The Shiek Of Araby, Keep Your Temper, Bring On The Band, The Old Stamping Ground, Harlem Joys, Love Remembers, I'm All Out Of Breath, Tango A La Caprice, Sneakaway.

Pearl PLP-8 "The New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra" - Volume II

Selections: St. Louis Tickle, Dusty Rag, Pleasant Moments, Sensation - A Rag, A Rag-Time Nightmare, Scott Joplin's New Rag, Panama Rag, Elite Syncopations, Tres Moutarde.

Personnel: Lionel Ferbos, trumpet; Orange Kellin, clarinet; Paul Crawford, trombone; William Russell, violin; Lars Edegran, piano; James Prevost, bass; Josiah Frazier, drums.

Available from: Pearl Records,
c/o Sonny Faggart,
P. O. Box 1411,
Salisbury, North Carolina 28144.

In THE RAGTIMER, third issue 1967, we expressed our appreciation of Center CLP-4, an album of piano solos in the Jelly Roll Morton style by Butch Thompson, a young pianist from the Midwest. Leonard Brackett of Center Records has now issued a second album by Thompson, and it is a fitting companion piece to the first one. Once again, Thompson takes off on a well-chosen list of selections associated with Jelly Roll, neither copying the records nor playing directly from sheet music, but nevertheless thoroughly demonstrating his mastery of Jelly Roll's style.

On the first Lp, all the tunes were composed by Jelly Roll. This time out, Thompson includes a couple of numbers by other composers which were also recorded by Jelly Roll. That is truly the only difference between these two fine Lps. Both are recommended for fans of the Jelly Roll style, and if you already have one, I'll bet you'll get the other.

Speaking of Jelly Roll, RCA Victor has turned out a two-Lp set of piano solos with conversation and occasional vocals by Willie 'The Lion' Smith that seems similar in conception to Jelly Roll's historic sessions for the Library of Congress. (For comments on other Lps by The Lion, see our review in THE RAGTIMER of May-June 1969.)

This project, however, doesn't come off quite as well as the earlier Mortons did. I rather suspect that this result is due to the fact that The Lion is reminiscing about a period of jazz history that is reasonably well documented -- the New York scene of the 1920's. On the other hand, the Morton recordings are a prime source of information about the New Orleans scene of the turn of the century. Thus, it is somewhat less of a burden to listen to Morton's conversation, with its inevitable bragging and exaggeration, than it is to sit through The Lion's remarks on these recordings. Some of Smith's anecdotes are interesting, to be sure, but when he begins a series of opinionated commentary on some subject reasonably familiar to jazz fans, and it turns out that he really has nothing of particular importance to contribute to it, one wishes that he would cut the chatter and get on with the piano playing.

When he does, however, there's plenty of fine piano playing to be heard. Some of the selections listed above are fairly brief, but quite a number of them are given the full Lion treatment -- which means a rhythmic, driving interpretation by one of the most lyrical and original keyboard men around, and one who is playing as well as ever.

Perhaps The Lion did not prepare himself for this recording the way he should have. It sounds as if he just walked into the studio and talked off the top of his head without realizing that this time the commentary was to be immortalized as his 'memoirs'. On the whole, the set would have been improved if more of the conversation had been edited out. There would still be plenty left to give the listener a good understanding of

The Lion's stage manner and personality.

As it is, the set might prove a bit boring on repeated listening, despite the uniform excellence of The Lion's playing throughout. Still and all, if you like the New York rent party style, particularly as performed by Willie 'The Lion' Smith, you probably won't regret having this set on your shelves.

In the January-February 1970 issue of THE RAGTIMER, my review of the first Lp by The New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra noted several deficiencies in their performance. However, judging from the music on this new Lp by the NORO, I'm glad to be able to say -- as in the old joke about middle-aged men who used to be broad-chested -- that most of this is behind them now.

The most striking thing about this Lp is the sense of cohesion the NORO has developed during the interim between sessions. In their earlier performances, the band seemed to be trying awfully hard to get through the arrangements of piano rags that forms the bulk of their repertoire, and finding it impossible to avoid clinkers, hesitations and other problems along the way.

However, in recent years, the band has had an opportunity to appear in public with some regularity, including a performance at the Newport Jazz Festival. This additional time and experience has given them, for the most part, that feeling of togetherness, ease of execution, and unity of purpose that makes the difference between success and failure in traditional music. The rhythm section plays with a light but firm beat, the tempos are bright but not hurried, and there is an almost total absence of obvious clinkers.

Moreover, in this Lp the band shows a refreshing attention to dynamics and interpretation. The brass occasionally drops out for the pleasant contrast of passages for clarinet and violin, such as in "Sensation - A Rag" and "Dusty Rag". There is a very nice trombone-violin spot in the trio to "Panama Rag" (not the traditional jazz standard, "Panama", but a fine tune from 1904 by C. Seymour). Finally, there is a good feeling for dynamics throughout the Lp, building the tunes up and heightening the overall interest in the tracks.

It should be noted that the musicians here are principally oriented toward the relatively primitive Preservation-Hall school of New Orleans jazz, which was brought to the fore with the rediscovery in the early 1940's of several nearly forgotten musicians from New Orleans. In many cases, these men were elderly and out of practice, and though they could still play fine, stomping jazz, they often played with tonal qualities far less polished than, say, those of studio musicians.

This problem of intonation is evident in the NORO, particularly in the work of trumpeter Forbos. Although it causes the band's attack to sound a bit fuzzy, it is not distracting in the more effortless performances, such as "Dusty Rag" and "St. Louis Tickle". The instruments blend well enough, even in the passages where the melodic

line shifts in mid-phrase from one instrument to another, as in the excellent arrangement of "Scott Joplin's New Rag".

However, when the band tackles more difficult material, requiring a slower pace and calling for the wind instruments to play more sustained notes, the tonal quality does get somewhat unpleasant, causing "Sensation - A Rag" and "Elite Syncopations" to be relatively weak tracks. Intonation also adds to the overall problems in Joplin's waltz tune "Pleasant Moments", which is saddled with a thin and overly long arrangement, resulting in a boring track -- the only complete failure on the Lp.

The arrangements are generally excellent, however, and the tunes are well chosen to make up as varied a program as one could expect from these old ragtime stock arrangements. Joplin is represented by three of the nine tunes ("Pleasant Moments", "Elite Syncopations" and "Scott Joplin's New Rag"), and Tom Turpin's seldom-played masterpiece, "A Rag-Time Nightmare", is given a fine ride that incorporates several delightful twists into only a minute and a half of playing time.

There are better Lps of band ragtime around, but this one isn't bad and the NORO is the only current ragtime group taking a gentle and delicate approach to the music that calls up the more bittersweet and fragile side of ragtime which so many ragtimers enjoy. And if the band does display less than standard-quality intonation, it's fair to say that the average small dance group of the turn of the century probably did too.

I'm inclined to put this Lp in the B-minus-to-C-plus category. If you're interested in hearing some of the old band ragtime arrangements, there are some nice moments here and several rather good tracks. Let's hope that the band continues to show this kind of improvement in future Lps.

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HAVE YOU ADDED THIS BOOK TO YOUR MUSICAL LIBRARY?

COMBO: USA - Eight Lives in Jazz by Rudi Blesh.

Published by Chilton Book Company,
Philadelphia, New York, London, 1971.

The best known personage to ragtimers is our own EUBIE BLAKE. The other lives are Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Jack Teagarden, Lester Young, Billie Holiday, Gene Krupa and Charlie Christian. (240 p. p.)

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DEATH OF ERNIE BARNES RECALLS
THE DAYS OF NICKELODEON IN 1910

Ernie Barnes was a well-known pianist from Toronto's silent movie and early vaudeville days. His unexpected death came close to the end of June 1972. An informative tribute was paid to Ernie in THE TORONTO STAR obituary Thursday, June 29, 1972. Ernie had a warm personality and made many friends over a long career. The obituary included the following:

Ernie Barnes, pianist for the last 14 years of vaudeville at Shea's Hippodrome where City Hall now stands, died suddenly of a heart attack in his King St. W. apartment. He was 76. He had been playing at service club luncheons until his death.

Barnes was only 14 when he got his first job in a Danforth Ave. nickelodeon accompanying the silent films. The Danforth was still a dirt road and his pay, $5 a week, was a lot of money in 1910.

He'd been a professional pianist ever since. He played an engagement at noon on the day of his death.

Barnes' repertoire still wasn't large when he started, so he filled in a lot of time playing finger exercises. Nobody thought there was anything wrong with them as accompaniment for the flickering figures on the screen.

During the year he stayed there, Barnes' mother died leaving him pretty well on his own. His pay jumped to $8 a week when he took a job at a new theatre, the Model, on Main St.

Barnes went from there to play just about every movie house in Toronto. During World War I, he took time off to entertain the troops.

When the Imperial Theatre opened for vaudeville, Barnes got the job of playing the piano and leading the four-man pit orchestra. He then went to the Globe, Star, Pantages and Loew's Theatres before Shea's.

"Those were great days," Barnes recalled during an interview four years ago. "Jack (Arthur) played the fiddle and led the orchestra. We played for all the top vaudeville acts -- Jack Benny, he played Love in Bloom on his fiddle even then, Charlie Chaplin, Burns and Allen, Bob Hope.

"I remember one time Red Skelton was playing for six months. He was a great guy."

Barnes thought it was all over for him when Shea's, the last vaudeville house switched to movies in 1941.

"But the war was on, and I found there was still lots of demand for my talents. I played for the troops and went on Victory Bond tours."

That Paradise Rag.

Words by
JOE GOODWIN.

Music by
GEO. W. MEYER.

Moderato.

f
fz
Hon - ey, hear that mus - ic float - ing
Hon - ey this is Heav - en and we're
Vamp.
p
p
through the air, It's good I de - clare, soothes me for fair,
all a - lone, lets nev - er roam, make it our home,
Seems to me those pear - ly gates are draw - ing near,
Come on get be - hind that sec - ond cloud out there,
p

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Of the earth I'm grow - ing wear - y, lets go up to Heav-en dear - ie,
Now that we are up a - bove dear, lets in-dulge in an - gel love dear,
Old St. Pe - ter's call - ing, just for you and I,
Kiss me while that mu - sic's play - ing, sweet heart mine,
p
Come on, let's try, reach - ing the sky.
Gee' ain't that fine! simp - ly de vine.
See dem gates are op - en wide, let's go right in - side,
Now I'll close my eyes in peace, mus - ic nev - er cease,

while the an - gels play that tune. just hear that
don't stop play - ing an - gel band. just hear that
poco rit.
CHORUS.
Par - a-dise Rag, My Hon-ey, can't you hear it? Heav - en - ly drag,
p-f
My ba - by, please don't fear it, lets you and I, — with an-gels fly, —
Can't you hear me soft - ly pray-ing for that tune to keep on play-ing, That gold - en shore,
p-f

My pet it's grow-ing near-er, look just once more, I seem to see it clear-er,
dear, I feel so queer, that mus-ic's near, but don't you
cresc.
fear, Now just you cud-dle clos-er if you-'re able 'cause I hear the horn of Ga-briel
1
2
blow-ing that Par-a-dise Rag. that Rag.
fz

MUSIC REPRINT CLUB NEWS
CHAPTER VII

Second Mailout - A further eight reprints are included in this group.

The Coney Island Dip - March/Two Step 1901 (A. J. Ressegue) Pub. by Composer.
The Maurice Rag 1912 (Wm. H. Penn) The Penn Music Co.
Alligator Bait Rag 1912 (Hal G. Nichols) F. A. Mills.
Redhead Rag 1910 (Irene Franklin & B. Green) Leo Feist.
One More Rag 1909 (Minnie Berger) Stark Music Co.
Affinity Rag 1910 (Irene Cozad) J. W. Jenkins Sons Music Co.
Oh! You Angel Rag 1911 (Ford T. Dabney) Maurice Shapiro.
Encore Rag 1912 (Tad Fischer) O. K. Houck Piano Co.

"The Coney Island Dip" (See back cover of THE RAGTIMER) uses a nostalgic title that coincides with the time when ragtime was beginning to create a few waves of its own. It is interesting to note that "Redhead Rag," "One More Rag" and "Affinity Rag" were composed by women. As one of the titles seems to say, the gals all have an affinity and feeling for ragtime. The second and the final theme of "Redhead Rag" offer added enjoyment to those members of the MUSIC REPRINT CLUB who appreciate key changes in chord progressions. The second theme uses the signature key of G while the final theme is in the key of C. The final theme moves through the full dominant cycle or circle of 5ths, for example, C - F - B-flat - E-flat - A-flat - D-flat - G-flat - C-flat (B) - E - A - D - G and returns finally to C. Note the pause part way through where the extra bar (B) brings in the enharmonic interval as the notation changes from C-flat to B-natural.

"Oh! You Angel Rag" is by Ford (Fred) Dabney who wrote an all-time hit number the previous year called "That's Why They Call Me 'Shine'." The rag in this reprint group is described as a companion number to Dabney's 1909 composition "Oh! You Devil Rag." The balance of the reprints in this mailout should prove to be equally enjoyable. The final section of this chapter will be going out to the members of the reprint club before the end of the year.

NOTICE: The membership in REPRINT CLUB - CHAPTER VII is now closed. SOCIETY members who did not join will have an opportunity to purchase the reprint music as individual selections when the music is eventually offered in THE RAGTIMER.

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RAGTIME... UNDER YOUR HAT Cont'd from Page 3.

Since we're so "high" these days on Ragtime it seems appropriate to reprint a rag song of 1911 in this issue with the title "THAT PARADISE RAG" by Joe Goodwin to the music of Geo. W. Meezer.

Finally, we hope as many members as possible are making it to the SOCIETY'S 8th Annual Bash at the CARA INN, Toronto, on October 14th, 1972. We'll be there to greet you.

SCOTT JOPLIN REDISCOVERED - PART 3

The third part of this series is a reprint of the reporting of a concert, devoted to the music of Scott Joplin, written by John S. Wilson and published in The New York Times, Monday Oct. 25, 1971.

FANS OF RAGTIME REPAY A BIG DEBT

Concert Honors Scott Joplin for his Enduring Impact

Scott Joplin, a composer whose work is a landmark in American musical development, died in 1917. For 20 years before that, his compositions had been the spearhead of the popular music of the period, ragtime. On Friday night, 54 years after Mr. Joplin's death, the first concert ever devoted to his music was presented in the auditorium of the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. These things, apparently, cannot be rushed.

In the years since Mr. Joplin's death, ragtime has, for the most part, been played for laughs by pianists wearing derbys and garter sleeves who call themselves "knuckles" or "fingers." But over the last 20 years, a growing appreciation particularly of Mr. Joplin's rags, has been developing through recordings of old piano rolls and through the work of a new generation of young pianists, some with jazz backgrounds, some classically trained.

The occasion of Friday's unique concert before an invited and enthusiastic audience was the publication by the New York Library of the collected works of Mr. Joplin. The concert consisted of rags played by two classically-oriented pianists - William Bolcom and Joshua Rifkin - and by a jazz pianist who grew up with ragtime in her ears, Mary Lou Williams. In addition, there were four selections from Mr. Joplin's unproduced ragtime opera, "Treemonisha."

The composer's rags are filled with delightfully lilting, captivating melodies - melodies that can very easily be destroyed by harsh treatment. There was no harshness in the playing of either of the two strict constructionists on the program - Mr. Bolcom and Mr. Rifkin - but it was the stricter of the two, Mr. Bolcom, who projected the airy charm of Mr. Joplin's rags most effectively. He produced cleaner, crisper performances than those of Mr. Rifkin, who tended toward a soft, fudging effect.

Miss Williams gave only a brief, passing bow to ragtime tradition before moving on to her own jazz-based interpretations, using interpolated swipes, sweeps and tickles that led into the rolling, swinging phrasing that is her trademark. In the process, she illustrated the close relationship of Mr. Joplin's rags to the jazz that grew out of them.

The four samples offered from Mr. Joplin's "Treemonisha," sung by a chorus of 16 and 3 soloists, did not suggest that a contemporary audience would find much of interest in this ragtime opera. One song, "A Real Slow Drag," is a lovely, languorous tune that is a direct reflection of Mr. Joplin's piano rags. And, "We're Goin' Around," a ringplay, became a lively dance song. But the other two suggested that Mr. Joplin was trying to accommodate his material to the standards of the European light opera of his day.

Members of THE RAGTIME SOCIETY will be interested to learn that this concert was recorded and that a recording can be obtained through the New York Public Library. We are grateful to our member Jack L. Ralston of Kansas City for sending us the particulars along with his review of the record album. Jack is Director, Institute for Studies in American Music, at the University of Missouri in Kansas City. His review is as follows:

A LIMITED EDITION OF THE MUSIC OF SCOTT JOPLIN in Stereo

By Jack L. Ralston

AN EVENING WITH SCOTT JOPLIN. A special Limited Edition of 1,000 stereo albums produced by Nonesuch Records as a contribution to The New York Public Library. (Not available commercially). May be ordered from: Library & Museum of the Performing Arts, Music Division/Joplin Recording, 111 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10023. Donation: $10. 00.

Contains: Maple Leaf Rag; Solace - A Mexican Serenade; The Ragtime Dance (Bill Bolcom); Elite Syncopations; Pleasant Moments; Pine Apple Rag (Mary Lou Williams); Bethena - A Concert Waltz; Magnetic Rag (Joshua Rifkin); Excerpts from "Treemonisha" Directed by John Motley.

The music of Scott Joplin is finally coming into its own again with the general public which accepted its ragtime syncopations at the turn of this century. Few pianos at that time lacked a copy of the MAPLE LEAF RAG and many had its successors as well. Serious composers in this country failed to recognize its potential as a native musical force, a point not missed by their European counterparts. In the intervening years there has remained a faithful core of Joplin devotees who collect and most importantly, perform his rags.

The current revival of interest in Joplin's music began a year or two ago with the issuance of two recordings on the Nonesuch label, Joshua Rifkin's PIANO RAGS BY SCOTT JOPLIN (Nonesuch H71248) and Bill Bolcom's HELIOTROPE BOUQUET, PIANO RAGS (Nonesuch H71257).

The crescendo of enthusiasm was swelled by the release of Vera Brodsky Lawrence's edition of THE COLLECTED WORKS OF SCOTT JOPLIN (N. Y. : The New York Public Library, 1971). To mark the date of publication, October 22, 1971, the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts, presented "An Evening With Scott Joplin." Featured performers were Bill Bolcom, Mary Lou Williams, Joshua Rifkin, and a selected group of singers directed by John Motley. Fortunately the music of the evening was recorded and through the generosity of Nonesuch Records a limited number of pressings are available for sale through The New York Public Library, all proceeds to aid the continued operation of the Music Division.

In planning the makeup of the recorded program the Music Division Staff, Frank C. Campbell, Jean Bowen, Richard Jackson, Vera Brodsky Lawrence, and their colleagues kept in mind the concept of presenting a well-rounded, varied concert. In building a

program from the works of a single composer one must have variety and progression, a development, if you will. Joplin provided the raw material in the form of rags, syncopated waltzes, tangos, and songs in the guise of an opera. Judicious selection of representative works by the staff was joined by the provision of artists whose approach to the Joplin works was equally creative.

The three pianists represented were Joshua Rifkin, Bill Bolcom, and Mary Lou Williams. Within this group of superlative interpretive artists, one can immediately recognize a progression. How fortunate to have the three side by side!

Joshua Rifkin brings his musicological background into play in his very correct interpretation of every nuance and marking in the score, the pedalling, the dynamics, the rubatos all come through in a clear and relaxed tempo. (Joplin would have been flattered by such attention to his printed directions.)

Bill Bolcom is a composer and performer of a very high order. When Bolcom plays Joplin one is immediately struck by the intensity of his interpretations. Here is playing that is stylistically correct, rhythmically dynamic, and the tempo just right. (Joplin would have approved because this is how Rags were interpreted by the best contemporary performers.) His added notes increase the level of drive but he stops short of overdrive.

Mary Lou Williams draws on her years of experience as an entertainer, dating from her days as a pianist with Andy Kirk's Clouds of Joy Band. And entertainer she is - flashes of merriment mark her highly individualistic interpretations. In her shaping of Joplin's notes she elaborates and extends the cadences and provides new harmonic structures which bring us a step beyond the Ragtime era to the Blues and a transitional style leading into Jazz. Mary Lou enjoys playing Joplin (He would have enjoyed it too!), and the audience loved it with enthusiastic responses to each piece.

That the program should include excerpts from TREEMONISHA is only right. The use of piano accompaniment probably parallels Joplin's own experience with the work as it never achieved a full performance during his lifetime. Likely this performance was the first since his death. Since then we have had performances at Morehouse College in February, 1972, with orchestrations realized by T. J. Anderson and in August, 1972, at Wolf Trap Farm Park with Bill Bolcom's orchestrations.

TREEMONISHA is not a Ragtime opera although in some of the numbers syncopations are to be found. There are soaring, lyric lines with moments of great delight. On the other hand there are rollicking patter songs and dances carefully choreographed by Joplin in the score. Here is genuine musical syncretism, the fusion of grand opera, operetta, and the Ragtime idiom.

In presenting the music of Joplin in printed form, in live and recorded form, the staff of The New York Public Library are to be commended. The organizational, bibliographic, and artistic contributions of Vera Brodsky Lawrence are of a most praiseworthy order. She served as editor for the printed edition, author of the slip jacket notes, and was a guiding force at all levels of the production of these tributes to Scott Joplin.

Seldom is there such a splendid opportunity to aid a library whose future is in jeopardy and acquire a musical document of real merit and enjoyment with the simple act of writing a small check. Do it today!

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - in the Odyssey Lounge at the top of the Hyatt Regency, Toronto, 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

"Ragtime" BOB DARCH - at AJ's Cafe, 156 Cumberland St., in Toronto from Sept. 4th, 5:30 p. m. to 12:30 a. m.

DON EWELL - at Cav-A-Bob, Arcade, in Toronto from Sept. 18th.

JOHN MADDOX - at Arlington Park Towers, Chicago, Ill., Sept. 4th to Oct. 14th. at Holiday Inn, Yakima, Wash., Oct. 16th to Nov. 18th.

MIKE MONTGOMERY - at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Mich., Fri. Nights.

MAX MORATH - on the road with his show "At The Turn Of The Century."

CHARLIE RASCH - & "Sister Kate" with the Jacktown Jazz Band, at Bill Cones' Downstairs Saloon, Jackson, Mich., Fri. & Sat. Nights.

BOB SEELEY - at Charlie's Crab Restaurant & Lounge, 3230 Pine Lake Rd., Orchard Lake, Mich., Mon. thru Sat.

TREBOR TICHENOR - and the Saint Louis Ragtimers can be heard on The Goldenrod Showboat in St. Louis, Missouri.

PETER TURNER - with the Apex Jazz Band, at the Sword In Hand, Bury, St. Edmund's, England.

TERRY WALDO - at Deibel's Restaurant, German Village, Columbus, Ohio, Wed. & Thurs. Nights.

TEX WYNDHAM - and The Red Lion Jazz Band, appearing regularly, at The Surry Restaurant, 1100 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Del.

PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

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